

Crime Victims Needs Assessment

Prepared for

**The Wisconsin Department of Justice
Office of Crime Victim Services**

and

Citizens of Judicial District 9

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Introduction

In 2005 the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Office of Crime Victim Services began a journey to develop a Crime Victim Needs Assessment process to document all crime-related services across the State of Wisconsin and to understand the needs of counties and tribal communities. The goal is to document crime victims' unmet needs and communities' priorities related to crime victim services. As such, this project:


- ✓ Gathers comprehensive/consistent information from Wisconsin counties and tribes
- ✓ Assists communities to collaboratively set priorities
- ✓ Disseminates results in user-friendly format
- ✓ Reflects viewpoints of crime victims

In 2006 World Bridge Research began assisting the Department of Justice with this Crime Victim Needs Assessment effort using an approach called Participatory Action Research (PAR). PAR was developed in contrast to conventional research approaches. PAR is characterized by having three primary components: 1) an iterative process for conducting research that includes reflection and action; 2) having community members and stakeholders involved with the research process; and 3) using findings to promote positive community change. These three approaches are interwoven throughout the project design and provide for a richer and more culturally sensitive assessment than a researcher directed, traditional approach. Essentially PAR is research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it.

Essentially Participatory Action Research (PAR) is research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it.

To document all crime-related services and unmet needs across Wisconsin, the Needs Assessment project began by interviewing key informants [victim/witness specialists/coordinators, law enforcement agencies (county and municipal), community service providers and representatives from local departments of human services] in each county and tribal community. Appointments were made with individuals and groups to ask them questions about:

- ✓ Community composition
- ✓ Services available to victims of crime
- ✓ Community assets
- ✓ Unmet needs of crime victims
- ✓ The underserved
- ✓ Crime trends
- ✓ Victim rights
- ✓ Innovative programs



Key informants were also asked to fill out a questionnaire about unmet needs at the end of the interview. The survey and interview questions shared some similar topics with the interviews providing an opportunity for the research team to learn the insights and reasons behind interviewees' perspectives. A second round of key informant interviews were held with named victim service agencies and other agencies or groups providing victim services programming that were deemed innovative and not known by victim service grant makers.

To build upon the iterative process for assessment and action, findings from the key informant interviews and surveys were presented at the District 9 Priority Setting meeting on October 12, 2007. The meeting featured two parts – reflection and discussion about the findings from the interviews and surveys followed by a consensus building method using group participation technologies to identify recommendations for funding priorities for crime victim services needs and gaps.

In a final step for the district, the emerging recommendations were incorporated into an internet based survey tool which sought to prioritize the recommendations. Interviewed key informants, participants of the district meeting and all other known service providers in the district were asked to complete the survey.

The three initial steps – interviews and surveys, district meeting and on-line survey – are summarized in this report.

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These key informant interviews and surveys are to be rounded out with interviews and focus groups with victims/survivors of crime, members of underserved communities and representatives of statewide organizations. Also, an advisory group of victims, former victims and survivors from across the state oversees various aspects of the Needs Assessment's implementation.

Summary

Judicial District 9 is made of the following 12 Wisconsin counties: Florence, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Menominee, Oneida, Price, Shawano, Taylor, and Vilas. The Menominee Reservation is also located in District 9. Every county and the Menominee Reservation was represented in the needs assessment process with 45 individuals interviewed, 42 surveys completed, 10 people participating at the district meeting and 19 responding to the follow-up online survey. The following summaries were created from the key informant interviews and surveys collected in Judicial District 9.

Crime trends:

- ✓ Drugs and alcohol
- ✓ Juvenile Crimes
- ✓ Interpersonal Crimes

Assets - commonly referred to services:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ✓ Counseling services | ✓ Senior centers |
| ✓ Low cost clothing stores | ✓ Victim/witness programs |
| ✓ Sexual assault programs | ✓ Outpatient help for victims who |
| ✓ Domestic violence programs | use drugs and alcohol |
| ✓ Mental health services | ✓ Homeless shelters |
| ✓ Health care centers | ✓ Community centers |
| ✓ Family resource centers | ✓ Intensive in-home therapy |
| ✓ Social services | |

Underserved crime victims:

- ✓ Elderly
- ✓ Victims with mental health needs (including persons with developmental disabilities)
- ✓ New immigrants and refugees

Surveys identified:

- ✓ Victims with mental health issues
- ✓ Rural victims
- ✓ Domestic assault victims
- ✓ Child victims
- ✓ Sexual assault victims
- ✓ Child victims of sexual assault

Existing innovative services:

- ✓ One stop counseling shop
- ✓ Churches
- ✓ Crime response specialist

Programs on key informants' "wishlist" include:

- ✓ Public/private transportation services
- ✓ More counseling for child sexual assault victims
- ✓ More counseling services in general
- ✓ Shelter services for men and boys
- ✓ More male adult educators for male youth
- ✓ More staff and services "across the board"
- ✓ Better waiting spaces for victims
- ✓ Prevention programs
- ✓ Programs to help victims with self-esteem and jobs
- ✓ More drug and alcohol counseling for youth
- ✓ Parenting classes
- ✓ Access to hospitals and pediatric exams
- ✓ Diapers for children in shelter with their moms

At the district meeting, participants reflected on the above findings and used a consensus process to answer the question "What are our recommendations for 2008 funding priorities for victim services?" In a follow-up online survey District 9 residents were asked to prioritize the recommendations. The ranked recommendations were:

1. Impacting our future by advocating for children
2. A helping hand up: facilitating victim empowerment
 - and-
 - Adequate and safe victim focused court services
(tie for second place)
3. Cents-able funding outside the box for general operations
 - and-
 - Increase crime victim compensation funding, add emergency property, security
(tie for third place)
4. Increased affordable, comprehensive mental health services for all
5. Learn or lose: victim services education for criminal justice professionals
6. Increase access to civil justice



A complete depiction of the ideas and victim needs that make up each funding recommendation can be found on page 19.

Findings from Key Informant Interviews

Key informants from Judicial District 9 representing victim/witness programs, sheriff's offices, community service providers and departments of human services were interviewed between June and September, 2007. Forty-five individuals were interviewed (30 women and 15 men). The following summarizes the themes that emerged from these interviews.

Crime Trends

Some of the emerging crime trends that were discussed by key informants include: crimes relating to alcohol and drugs, juvenile crimes, and interpersonal crimes.

Drugs and Alcohol: Many key informants say that, "most crimes are related to alcohol and drugs." Some relate that the area is relatively "unscathed from meth problems". Others say that though drugs are a big problem, "meth" is not, but there is concern about "meth coming in". Others say that though "meth" is a big problem, marijuana is the drug most frequently used".

Cocaine and OxyContin are also described as "leading drugs" in this district. One informant suggests that adults "get cocaine from Chicago". It is also suggested that youth sell many new drugs and that it is "easy to get these from friends". One informant states, "[It is] easier to buy pot and drugs than to buy cigarettes."

Many key informants say that, "most crimes are related to alcohol and drugs."

Many key informants talked about the volume of burglaries and thefts due to alcohol and drug problems experienced in their communities. OxyContin is said to lead to dozens of burglaries and thefts per week.

Some informants talk about the problems with alcohol in the context of drunk driving on the road and in the water. Many communities say they have drunk driving problems. Informants in counties that border Michigan discussed how drunk driving laws are "lax" in Wisconsin compared to Michigan. However, some communities say they have very few drunk driving fatalities while others state that drunk driving injuries and death from drunk driving are significant problems in their counties.

Juvenile Crimes: Juvenile crimes is said to be a big problem in many communities due to lack of parental controls, youth "boredom" and "big city" influences. As for lack of parental controls one informant states, "Lack of supervision is really the culture of the area."

Another informant states,

"Parents seem to ignore the law and allow drinking in their presence.
Parents allow underage drinking."

Another informant states, “Children are smoking pot with parents!”

It is said that there are not a lot of youth activities available in many communities in this district and that some of the crime trends involving youth include burglary, juvenile sex crimes and youth stalking crimes. Some suggest that “juvenile problems are occurring at younger ages” as well. One informant states,

“Youth need something to do. If you don’t play sports, there is nothing for males to do. Nothing therapeutic to offer youth. Both parents work, and there is nothing for them to do.”

Some informants discussed how youth are being influenced by other youth moving in from more urban areas. One informant states,

“Lots of people from cities move here. These people are teaching local youth about ways of the city like bringing weapons to school and threatening students.”

Another informant states,

“Gangs are here. Youth are afraid to go to school if not affiliated with a gang. [We are] not doing enough to protect them.”

Interpersonal Crimes: Some informants discussed that their perception is that sexual assaults are an emerging crime trend. There is also a perception that there is “lots of child sexual abuse because of alcohol abuse”. Another perception is that there is an influx in juvenile sexual assaults and incest, but it is acknowledged that this might be because education is helping young people report these types of crimes.

Some informants say they are seeing more sexual assaults than domestic violence assaults in their communities. Others discussed how their community is seeing an increase in domestic violence and that their shelter use has doubled over the last year.

Underserved Populations

In key informant interviews the underserved populations in District 9 communities are the elderly, persons with mental health needs including persons with developmental disabilities and new immigrants and refugees.

Elderly: It is noted that many senior citizens relocate and retire to many areas in the district. Unfortunately, elders are experiencing some financial difficulties. One financial hardship is that some seniors are raising their grandchildren. It was also stated that casinos in the area accentuate financial problems of the elderly. Some suggest that fraud cases involving the elderly are on the rise. It was noted that barriers exist because the elderly often do not use services and are afraid to “call in” requesting services.

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Victims with Mental Health Needs: Persons with mental health needs are thought of as underserved because of under reporting and lack of access to services. One informant states,

“The mentally ill have [an] 8 to 12 week wait for services as do drug abusers. These are [the people] who fall between the cracks between social security and mental health help.”

It is also noted that persons with “slight mental impairments” and “minor mental problems” are not getting help because services that were once more readily available are no longer serving this population.

Child victims, child victims with mental health issues, and children needing psychiatric help are of particular need because therapeutic services are dispersed all over the state. Getting psychiatric help for young victims requires a great deal of travel.

One informant suggests,

“Education is needed to help all those underserved. That should be an on-going project. There are many services, but hard to get these people to use them. Need help with follow up on using many services.”

New Immigrants and Refugees: Many view “Hispanics” and people who are Hmong as underserved because of language barriers and the need for interpreters. Some believe that “migrant Hispanics are probably well served” because this group is more connected to a service infrastructure. However, new immigrants with immigration challenges are seen as wanting to keep to themselves. Some informants talked about the need for Eastern-European translators to assist with this new immigrant community.

Innovative Services and “Wishlist”

When asked what kinds of services victims are commonly referred to for assistance and support, many key informants indicated: counseling services, low cost clothing stores, sexual assault programs, domestic violence programs, mental health services, health care centers, family resource centers, social services, senior centers, victim/witness programs, outpatient help for victims who use drugs and alcohol, homeless shelters, community centers and intensive in-home therapy. Some communities did identify a few programs perceived to be unique or innovative:

- ✓ One stop counseling shop in the same location - Different counseling options across the life span (still in development)
- ✓ Churches – Some try to help solve homelessness
- ✓ Crime response specialist - Handles all victims before criminal complaints have been executed

On the same note key informants also identified programs and services they wish they had available in their local community. In some cases these services were once available, but are no longer due to local funding reductions:

- ✓ Public/private transportation services
- ✓ More counseling for child sexual assault victims
- ✓ More counseling services in general
- ✓ Shelter services for men and boys
- ✓ More male adult educators for male youth
- ✓ More staff and services “across the board”
- ✓ Better waiting spaces for victims
- ✓ Prevention programs
- ✓ Programs to help victims with self-esteem and jobs
- ✓ More drug and alcohol counseling for youth
- ✓ Parenting classes
- ✓ Access to hospitals and pediatric exams
- ✓ Diapers for moms in shelter

Assets key informants wish were available include:

- ✓ Affordable housing
- ✓ More jobs/industry
- ✓ Homeless shelters
- ✓ Civil attorneys
- ✓ Eastern-European language translators
- ✓ Mediation for “broken” families
- ✓ More organized programs for youth
- ✓ Boot camps for juvenile delinquents
- ✓ Batterers programs
- ✓ More counseling for sex offenders

Barriers to Services

By far the biggest barrier to service identified by most key informants is the *lack of transportation* available to many crime victims. One solution includes a program to repair cars. Another solution is for local programs to develop volunteer transportation where volunteers either use their own vehicles to transport victims or an agency van.

Victim Rights Difficult to Enforce

V*ictim/Witness Support:* Some victim/witness coordinators discussed the struggle to be with victims at all times during a court case. If a case is sensitive or if there is a problem understanding things the victim/witness person will accompany the victim. However, it is noted that many counties need more funds for victim/witness support.

Court: Many counties talked about the problem of not having a separate waiting area for victims, especially when children are victims. Some problems also arise where waiting areas are literally in the hallway and the victim encounters the accused and the accused family members during court proceedings. One community talked about victims being allowed to testify by phone because of transportation issues.

Victim Notification: Victim/witness coordinators discussed the various problems in locating victims following some crimes. In many cases judges are part-time, so it is difficult to keep up with changing schedules. It was noted that victims are kept pretty well informed, but sometimes this is an issue, especially with rescheduled trials. Some employers give victims a hard time for taking time off to follow up with their cases, particularly when dates keep getting changed by the court. Also, if bail is made, victims are not notified of their offender's release from jail in some cases. It is often up to jail personnel to make the bail release notification.

One informant states "it seems like the defendants have more rights than the victims". This is particularly the case when the issue of speedy trials or the timely disposition of a case is discussed.

Restitution: In the District 9 interviews there were many issues discussed about restitution. Many victims do not get restitution and simply give up. Many communities work with probation officers to ensure probation is extended until civil judgment is paid. The primary problem cited is that restitution collection does not have a structure for payback.

Timely Disposition of a Case: One informant states "it seems like the defendants have more rights than the victims". This is particularly the case when the issue of speedy trials or the timely disposition of a case is discussed. Some informants talk about the need to be honest with victims in assessing the situation and try not to over promise what might happen especially in the area of speedy disposition. A frustration from cases rescheduled without any thought of the victim was expressed by several informants.

Findings from Unmet Needs Survey Results

Forty-two individuals representing law enforcement, victim/witness programs, human services and community-based victim service programs completed the Unmet Needs Survey in the 12 counties that comprise Judicial District 9.

Who are Underserved?

Sixty-two percent of the respondents think victims with mental health needs are underserved. Fifty-five percent responded that victims of crime who live in rural environments are underserved. Thirty-eight to forty-five percent of respondents think the following groups are underserved: child victims of sexual abuse, sexual assault victims, child victims of crime in general and domestic violence victims.

Who are underserved?	N = 42	%
Victims with mental health issues	26	62%
Rural victims	23	55%
Domestic violence victims	19	45%
Child victims	17	40%
Sexual assault victims	17	40%
Child victims of sexual abuse	16	38%

When given a list of potentially underserved populations, district interviewees strongly identified the list above. This list supplements the findings from the interviews and points out a few community groups that did not come readily to people's minds during the interview discussions.

Community Coordination and Unmet Needs

When asked, "On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being 'Not At All' and 3 and 4 being 'Very Much', please rate the extent to which you believe that the current service system..." the following represent the majority "**Very Much**" response. Respondents could also answer "Don't Know" or "Not Applicable".

The current service system...	"Very Much" Response	N = 42	%
Provides services that are accessible.	Very Much	34	81%
Is characterized by efficient and accurate communication.	Very Much	32	76%
Creates opportunities for joint planning across different types of agencies (e.g., legal, mental health, physical health, public safety, domestic violence, child welfare).	Very Much	30	71%
Provides services that are gender specific.	Very Much	27	64%
Shares information about what services agencies currently deliver or are planning to deliver.	Very Much	27	64%
Allows differing points of view to exist among organizations.	Very Much	27	64%
Is integrated, that is, agencies are by various means linked together to allow services to be provided in a coordinated and comprehensive manner.	Very Much	26	62%
Prevents crime victims from getting lost in the complex system.	Very Much	26	62%
Can be accessed at different stages of victim recovery process.	Very Much	26	62%
Provides services that are individualized.	Very Much	24	57%
Addresses the issues of trauma.	Very Much	23	55%
Provides services that are culturally appropriate.	Very Much	23	55%
Ensures that agencies have timely access to client records in ways that do not violate client confidentiality and/or rights.	Very Much	22	52%
Fosters a "big picture" understanding of the service system and the roles/responsibilities of the agencies that constitute that system.	Very Much	21	50%
Involves crime victims in improving and/or changing services.	Very Much	20	48%
Develops clear community-wide goals and plans.	Very Much	19	45%

When asked, “On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being ‘Not At All’ and 3 and 4 being ‘Very Much’, please rate the extent to which you believe that the current service system...” the following represent the majority “**Not at All**” response. Respondents could also answer “Don’t Know” or “Not Applicable”.

The current service system...	“Not at All” Response	N = 37	%
Provides services that incorporate non-traditional approaches.	Not at All	24	57%

Community Assets

When asked, “On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being ‘Not At All’ and 3 and 4 being ‘Very Much’, please rate the availability of these community assets,” the following represent the majority “**Very Much**” response. Respondents could also answer “Don’t Know” or “Not Applicable”.

Services and Supports	“Very Much” Response	N = 37	%
Senior Center / Programs	Very Much	39	93%
Food Assistance	Very Much	36	86%
Early Childhood Programs like Headstart	Very Much	35	83%
Recreation / Sports	Very Much	33	79%
Substance Abuse Assessment, Prevention, and Treatment	Very Much	29	69%
Health Education	Very Much	29	69%
Support Groups	Very Much	27	65%
After-School Programs	Very Much	25	60%
Services for People with Disabilities	Very Much	23	55%
Low Cost or Free Clothing, Furniture and Housewares	Very Much	23	55%
Information and Referral Hotline	Very Much	21	50%
Job Training / Job Treatment	Very Much	18	43%

When asked, “On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 and 2 being ‘Not At All’ and 3 and 4 being ‘Very Much’”, please rate the availability of these community,” the following represent the majority “**Not at All**” response. Respondents could also answer “Don’t Know” or “Not Applicable”.

Services and Supports	“Not at All” Response	N = 42	%
Supervised Visitation / Exchange Centers	Not at All	32	76%
Transportation Assistance	Not at All	30	71%
Mental Health Services	Not at All	22	52%
Family Support Centers / Services	Not at All	21	50%
Housing Assistance	Not at All	20	47%
Violence Prevention	Not at All	20	47%
Mentoring	Not at All	18	43%

District Meeting Findings and Prioritization Survey

Ten people from six counties (Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Price, and Vilas) in Judicial District 9 attended the Crime Victim Needs Assessment Priority Setting Meeting in Rhinelander, Wisconsin on October 12, 2007. The group included five victim/witness coordinators and five domestic violence/sexual assault community organization staff. A staff member from the Wisconsin Department of Justice, Office of Crime Victim Services was also present.

An overview of the Office of Crime Victim Services Needs Assessment project was presented including the findings from interviews with 45 people and the 42 surveys conducted throughout District 9 between June and September, 2007. The majority of meeting participants were also part of the interview/survey phase. The presentation highlighted findings from the interviews and surveys covering the following areas: Crime Trends, Assets and Innovative Services, Underserved Populations, Services and Assets “Wishlist”, and Crime Victims Rights.

Crime Trends

The group was asked to reflect on the crime trends identified in the interviews and they provided the following insights:

- ✓ Some expressed concern that alcohol was given as excuse for crime especially interpersonal crime. This fact didn’t ring true for their experience.
- ✓ Property crimes are a huge portion of crime and alcohol isn’t the only link. Someone suggested that alcohol is not the cause of the crime; do not want to minimize the crime because of the alcohol. Another participant wanted to recognize that many people believe that everyone is drinking in the district; long been part of the culture.
- ✓ Impact of poverty is scary; people are loosing electricity, housing; etc. This participant wondered if this has impact on property crimes.
- ✓ It did not resonate for some that boredom is the cause of youth violence.
- ✓ Another stated that it’s in our culture that abuse is acceptable and groomed in our district.
- ✓ Financial abuse was linked to an impact of “meth” and domestic violence – women can be forced into check fraud and stealing by their partners who are “meth” users.
- ✓ Some felt that because people in the district live in small communities that many people don’t want to seek help.

Assets / Innovative or New Services

The group discussed the referral services that were used in their communities but that were missing from the list:

- ✓ Cultural center – working with growing Hispanic population
- ✓ Judicare for legal services
- ✓ Churches



Underserved Populations:

When asked what other populations or concerns they would add to the list, the group indicated:

- ✓ Domestic violence and sexual assault victims who are really rural were missing; isolation is intense and creates difficulties such as kids needing to go in new schools.
- ✓ With no crime-related crisis response, cases sit without any court movement or court system support for six to nine months; these cases are not yet referred to victim/witness programs.
- ✓ Children referred for abuse – lots of services in place to help parents but nothing to protect the child, lack of foster homes, lots of requirements to substantiate abuse against a child, in child abuse cases moms seem to support abuser. Also currently communities are asked to report child abuse to law enforcement but law enforcement is not well trained.
- ✓ People with physical disabilities especially seniors with disabilities are missing. They cannot physically get in to access services such as shelter.

Services and Assets “Wishlist”:

As the group reviewed the interviewees ideas regarding “wishlist” of services and assets the group discussed the following ideas:

- ✓ There needs to be help for separating couples so they can keep children out of role of being pawns between the parents.
- ✓ More accountability for batterers treatment programs and watching for domestic violence abusers who become child abusers.

Services needed that are not listed:

- ✓ Need skilled district attorneys, civil attorneys, judges.
- ✓ Prohibition of guns is a big barrier to prosecution; many prosecutors are lessening the charges to avoid gun surrendering restrictions.
- ✓ Easier more accessible child care – this can really support women in getting jobs as they leave domestic violence relationships.
- ✓ Department of Justice grants provide good funds for providing staff and services but very restricted for “permanent materials” – washing machine for shelter, diapers, etc. Participants wished that funds could be used for administration for programming.

Crime Victims’ Rights

The group discussed desire to reform restitution. The new Executive Director of OCVS was previously with Department of Corrections. Under her guidance OCVS is already pursuing discussion about the issues with restitution. In addition, the Wisconsin Victim/Witness Professionals Association is also working on improving restitution through legislation.

Skilled prosecutors who can be held accountable, knowledgeable and skilled judges, better communication between district attorneys, victim/witness programs and victims were all identified as things that could remove some of the barriers to respectful victim services and ideas that would support victims rights. In addition, if more of the victims rights were in place finding victims would be naturally easier. For example, if court cases progressed in a more timely fashion, victims would be more available for court and compensation would be timely. At this current stage, victims often say it seems like the defendant has more rights than the victim.

For the second part of the meeting, participants incorporated the interview findings and their reflections into a consensus process to answer the question “What are our recommendations for 2008 funding priorities for victim services?” The recommendations list appears below and more details are available in Appendix A on page 19.

In a final step to understand the victim services needs in District 9, these emerging recommendations were incorporated into an internet based survey tool which sought to prioritize the recommendations. Interviewed key informants, participants from the district meeting and all other known service providers in the district were asked to complete the survey. Nineteen individuals representing 12 counties voted to prioritize the needs. This included people from five counties that were not represented by participants at the district meeting (Forest, Iron, Menominee, Shawano and Taylor counties).

The ranked recommendations were:

1. Impacting our future by advocating for children
2. A helping hand up: facilitating victim empowerment
- and-
Adequate and safe victim focused court services
(tie for second place)
3. Cents-able funding outside the box for general operations
- and-
Increase crime victim compensation funding, add emergency property, security
(tie for third place)
4. Increased affordable, comprehensive mental health services for all
5. Learn or lose: victim services education for criminal justice professionals
6. Increase access to civil justice



Implications

District 9 participants want to prioritize funding for **Impacting our future by advocating for children**. This recommendation strongly speaks to the needs of both younger and older children as crime victims as well as the future of their communities. Identified as an underserved population in the district, child victims especially those who are victims of sexual assault were a driving force behind the call for this recommendation. In addition, juveniles were repeatedly mentioned during interviews as being involved in crime and a need for social change around the norms of drinking and juvenile behavior was identified. Children and youth were at the core of several of the services wishlist items from more counseling for child sexual assault victims to shelter services for boys to more drug and alcohol counseling for youth. Adding to this call for intervention services for victims was the necessity of prevention programs and parenting classes which inevitably effect children. These ideas were strongly echoed in this recommendation through a wide variety of services for children and youth victims and a request for change within the systems that address their needs. In addition, district participants identified several community assets that might be parlayed into resources to make this priority a reality such as after-school programs, recreation and sports, and early childhood programs like Headstart. However, participants noted that supervised visitation and exchange centers were not available and might be part of this growing priority.

The members of District 9 were equally divided in their support for the next two top ranked recommendations: **A helping hand up: facilitating victim empowerment** and **Adequate and safe victim focused court services**. These recommendations, like many others from this district, place victims at the center of the priority and seek to design and expand services to pave a safer and more accommodating way for victims.

In **A helping hand up: facilitating victim empowerment** district members seek to address the basic and daily needs of victims of crime that are not always directly related to the crime but significantly impact their lives such as access to food, housing, clothing and employment. In addition, needs such as transportation and child care are linked both to court related activities and personal needs. While low cost clothing was identified by many in the district as an available resource all other basic needs were either listed as part of the services wishlist or an asset that communities wish they could offer. This was especially true for transportation and affordable housing options. Thus transportation options, a barrier to overall victim services, is incorporated into this highly prioritized recommendation.

District 9 participants turned their attention to the court system in the other top priority - **Adequate and safe victim focused court services**. This recommendation echoed some of the interviewees wishlist items such as better waiting spaces for victims in the courtroom and more staff “across the board”. Elements of the recommendation were also identified to be added to the wishlist by participants at the district meeting from a call for more

skilled district attorneys, civil attorneys and judges to better communication between district attorneys, victim/witness programs and victims. In this recommendation the district members decided to echo the call for transportation and child care, again acknowledging that without these highly needed services victim participation in the judicial system was limited. Finally the recommendation identified a service improvement needed in order to address the underserved population of new immigrants and refugees. Interpreter services were included as a critical part of adequate and safe victim focused court services.

Continuing with attention to changes within the court system, **Learn or lose: victim service education for criminal justice professionals** was included in the recommended priorities. While this recommendation broadly encompassed training for many levels of justice professionals, it makes a specific reference to elected officials.

For many interviewees and those who responded to the survey regarding underserved populations victims with mental health issues and victims living with developmental disabilities were recognized as lacking in services and support. For many mental health services and increased counseling services in general were seen as not available or as part of their communities' needs. In contrast, support groups and services for persons with disabilities were considered accessible and perhaps an asset to be built on. District meeting participants echoed this call with the creation of the recommendation **Increased affordable comprehensive mental health services for all**. Yet when the recommendations were ranked this recommendation was fourth.

It appears that victims who are elderly or victims of domestic violence or sexual assault are considered the "underserved" by key informants in the district. Senior centers, services for persons with disabilities, support groups and information and referral hotlines are considered "very much" available in this district and building on these assets could assist in reaching out and providing supportive services to these currently underserved groups.

Appendix A

What are our recommendations for 2008 funding priorities for victim services?							
Impacting our future by advocating for children	A Helping Hand Up: Facilitating Victim Empowerment	Adequate and safe victim focused court services	Learn or Lose: Victim Service Education for Criminal Justice Professionals	Cents-able funding outside the box for general operations	Increased affordable comprehensive mental health services for all	Increase crime victim compensation funding, add emergency property, security	Increase access to civil justice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Allow for kids to testify away from defendant •Visitation center •Mentors for juveniles •Revamp child abuse reporting to provide greater safety for kids •Revamping regulations for CPS/ juvenile court to embed DV/SA issues •Broad advertising campaign for social norms (child abuse, DV, SA, AODA) •Child Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding for subsidized housing •Affordable housing for victims' leaving •Funds to provide needs for individuals with no children •Services to meet basic needs (housing, food, clothing) •Transportation •Funds to provide for needs of disabled victims of crime •Child care •Adequate employment and employment training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Additional staff •More Court /DA/ Victim Service Staff •Secure waiting rooms for victims in every county •Increase court staff •Transportation options •Child care •Interpreter services screened and paid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Staff training •Training for DA/Judges •Training for Judges, DA, Guardian ad Litum •Mandatory training for court staff •Increased victim specific training •Accountability to follow laws •Bail notification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funds for practical program needs - shelter/ admin •Basic necessities for shelter •Fund victim services for operational expenses •Interpreter services screened and paid •Shelter in every county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Access to mental health services especially for children •Services for mental health •Wrap around services when there are AODA and MH issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funding directly for victims of property crimes •More Crime Victim Compensation funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Legal Assistance: civil, judicare, and family law